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School

News of recent activities at the Jerusalem School can be described under the headings of travel, study and diversions. Each has engendered its own kind and degree of interest, but it can be reported that it has been possible to go forward with every phase of the schedule as it was outlined last month.

Because the diversions were not numerous and can be reported on briefly, they will be described first. On October 11 the students and staff of the School held an "At Home" in the Director's House for friends and dignitaries of Jerusalem. Ninety guests attended the affair; among them were representatives from the various Consulates in the city, a number of municipal and regional officials, individuals from several of the schools and hospitals, and the leaders of the various religious communities in Jerusalem. The Dominicans of the École Biblique could not be present because of a retreat and the Mayor, Aref el-Aref, was absent because of illness, but we had the pleasure of meeting, among others, the Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Locum Tenens of the Armenians, the Archbishop of the Copts, Anwar Bey Khatib, former Mayor of Jerusalem, and our old friends, Dr. and Mrs. T. Canaan.

Later in the month, classes were cancelled by common consent one morning to witness the arrival of King Talal from Amman on his first visit to Jerusalem since the death of his father, King Abdullah. From the east gate of the School our group watched with interest the band, the honor guard and finally the King as he arrived with his attendants for conferences with the officials of Jerusalem. According to local news releases King Talal is showing an interest, as he has in the past, in the archaeological activities of the Kingdom.

It was a most pleasant diversion from routine to greet Miss Sirarpie Der Nersessian and her sister, Mrs. A. Der Nersessian, who arrived from Washington, D.C. via Paris, Cairo and Beirut on October 22. Miss Der Nersessian is Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology at Dumbarton Oaks and is honorary visiting lecturer at the Jerusalem School for the current academic year. Assisted by her sister she is working on Armenian manuscripts at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, and together they are entering into the activities of the School and adding a lively spark to the fellowship.

A visit on November 3, to a cave in the Wadi ed-Daraja, located in the desolate region west of the Dead Sea, started out as a diversion from academic pursuits but rapidly became a physical ordeal. On the invitation of Awni Bey Dajani, inspector of the Department of Antiquities, several members of the School joined in the search for a cave which had recently reported by the Bedawi. Accompanied by a guide from Bethlehem our party drove to a point about 5 miles southeast of the fork in the roads to Jericho and the Dead Sea, and after a walk of about 10 miles reached the cave. Samples of pottery were collected for the Department, and it was determined that any contents of the cave could be recovered only by excavating at some future date. Several members of our party were persuaded that a successful archaeologist in the area would have to be part camel and part goat.

Thanksgiving Day was observed by the School on November 22 with an excellent dinner prepared by Omar and Helen who had managed to secure two small turkeys. Families, including the children, were invited and there were fourteen at the table which had been colorfully decorated for the occasion. In the afternoon a tea was given in the Director's House for the Faculty of the Ecole Biblique and members of our School in honor of Professor Der Nersessian. It was good to see Pères Vincent, de Vaux and Benoit again and also to meet their famous colleagues Pères Savignac, Abel, Courcoyer and Tournay.

As far as study is concerned, seminars are conducted at the School on the days when we are in Jerusalem. Considerable time has been devoted to preparation for visits to sites of archaeological interest in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and the published reports are studied and discussed before each trip. A.D. Tushingham, our Annual Professor, has been directing the study of pottery and I have been doing the same for flints. Special attention has been given to the objects in the Palestine Archaeological Museum that come from Garettang's excavations at Jericho during the period 1931-36; the students are becoming quite adept at recognizing pottery types from the early levels of Jericho and at distinguishing the "Cananean", Tahanian and Natufian flints of the various types such as sickle-blades, borers, "lames de dégagement" and others. Before our recent trip to Jerash, Professor Der Nersessian lectured on the subject of the Christian churches of Jerash, and other reports were given by members of the School. Last week S.H. Muhtady, who has been the surveyor on recent excavations of the School and who is now employed in the Lands Department of the Jordan Government, spent a morning with us demonstrating the use of various surveying instruments and discussing some of the procedures and problems of the surveyor on an excavation.

Although there has been an emphasis upon archaeology in our studies, we are having the usual experience of finding that all study and travel bring new meaning to the Bible. For example, one evening Professor Der Nersessian lectured to the group on the architecture and mosaics of the Dome of the Rock, and the next morning we went to the Haram esh-sherif and spent several hours studying the area where once stood the temples of Solomon and Herod. One has the feeling there that he is walking on sacred ground; the dignity and beauty of the Dome of the Rock and el-'Aqsah give the modern visitor the kind of inspiration which must be akin to the experience of pilgrims in biblical times as they beheld the temple on Mt. Moriah. Shukry Ezy Said, secretary for the Department which administers the Haram esh-sherif, kindly arranged for the opening of "Solomon's Stables" in order that we might inspect the impressive substructure located at the southeast corner of the area. Several other famous sites in the Old City and environs have also been studied and visited; although the authenticity of some of them is doubtful there is no doubt that references in the Bible to places in Jerusalem are read with new interest when one can walk through the area. Visits have been made to the Garden of Gethsemane and neighboring sites in the Kidron Valley such as the tomb of Absalom, the Pool of Siloam and the site of Ophel, David's city. A group from the School made the traditional trip one evening through the Siloam tunnel which joins the pool of Siloam and Ain Rogel. Because many of the shops and offices which were located outside the walls before the recent war are now in the Old City, we frequently find it necessary to enter the city by Herod's Gate or Damascus Gate to transact our business. So we stop more often than in former years at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Lithostrotos, the Russian excavations, and at other places on the Via Dolorosa.

In addition to the trips in the Jerusalem area, all the members of the School, together with their families, made a one day trip to the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon by way of Ramallah, Nablus, Samaria and Jenin. Climbing to the top of Tell Ta'anach where traces of Sellin's excavations in 1901-02 may still be seen, we were able to view in the distance such places as Megiddo, Nazareth and Mt. Tabor. After lunch in an olive orchard near Tell Ta'anach and a visit at Jacob's Well near Nablus, we returned to Jerusalem stopping briefly at other sites of interest near the road.

The School has also taken the two major trips of the year which had to be completed before the rains make the roads in the remote areas of Syria and eastern Jordan impassable and before we move to Jericho for the excavations early next year. It is no exaggeration to say that the School became a school on wheels during these two projects, the one to Syria, Lebanon and Turkey from October 13 to 22, and the other to eastern Jordan from November 8 to 16. On the first journey the School group, composed of Professor Tushingham, James Storey, the two Fellows, Willard Hamrick and Victor Gold, our driver, Imran Abdo, and myself, followed an excellent itinerary planned by Professor Tushingham. Driving through Amman to Damascus we spent a day there securing the necessary papers and visas that enabled us to cross the Syrian border several times during the completion of the journey. In Damascus there was time only for a brief inspection of the museum with its famous Dura Synagogue and the spectacular Palmyrene objects, and a visit to the Suq, the Street called Straight, and a section of the city wall and gate. We had expected to go to Palmyra by way of Baalbek and Homs, but in order to spare ourselves the additional crossings of the border, and also because we were informed that the desert road was in good condition, we drove directly to Palmyra. Arriving in the afternoon, we were made welcome at the Hotel Zenobia which was quite adequate although not as grand as the name might suggest. During a day and a half at Palmyra we had time to study the great Temple of Baal, to inspect some of the statues and inscriptions in the small museum, to climb to the picturesque Arab castle located on a mountain to the west of the city, and to enter some of the remarkable tower tombs and underground tombs in the vicinity. The site of the temples, the colonnaded streets, the theatre, and the tombs combine with the amazing location of Palmyra at the edge of the desert to give the modern visitor a new feeling of admiration for the resourcefulness and energy of the Palmyrenes which created there a great center of culture in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D.

From Palmyra we drove to Aleppo by way of Homs and Hama. Space does not permit an adequate report of the sites visited along the way, but mention must be made of our stop at Mishrefiyeh, ancient Qatna, north of Homs, where the huge earthen ramparts and their entrances dating from Hyksos times are still visible. The several cameras of the members of the expedition were working over-time in the vicinity of the picturesque Syrian town of Hama, recording for posterity places of interest on the Orontes, the great water-wheels, and shapely, conical houses of the villages in northern Syria, and the landscape that is dotted with ancient tells. At Aleppo a visit was made to the impressive citadel which stands like a sentinel in the middle of the city and from which may be seen the mosques, public buildings and the neighboring villages. A visit to the Aleppo Museum provided an opportunity for the study of some of the remarkable objects on display there from excavations at Tell Halaf, Arslan Tash, Ras Shamra, Qatna and other famous sites in Syria.

The journey into Turkey was brief but permitted the group to see the tells near the road between the Syrian border and Antakia, to spend a day in the city which is famous, among other things, as the starting point for Paul's missionary journeys, and to inspect the fine mosaics in the museum. Our attempt to reach Seleucia and the mouth of the Orontes River failed by 3 or 4 kilometres because of the condition of the road, so we returned to Antakia for the climb up Mt. Silpius and a walk along the ancient wall.

Returning to Syria we drove to Latakia and visited Ras Shamra where it was reported that M. Schaeffer was expected in a few days to resume work. The custodian kindly guided us through the buildings which have been excavated and in which the tablets of ancient Ugarit were discovered. Near-by at Minet el-Beida the more ambitious members of our group went swimming in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Continuing along the seacoast to Tripoli we changed the program briefly from the archaeological to the scenic and drove to Besharra for a view of the Cedars of Lebanon. The excellent but winding road up the west side of the Lebanon Mountains leads past lovely terraced fields and provides an opportunity to look down on a large portion of the country side. Only a few of the old cedars are still standing, but the

244

sight of them gave us new admiration for the industry of the Phoenicians who were able to cut the giant cedars in Old Testament times and transport the wood to Jerusalem for use in the construction of the temple of Solomon. The trip was concluded with brief visits at Byblos, the museum in Beirut and the impressive ruins at Baalbek. Thanks to the sturdy qualities of the members of the expedition and also to the rugged construction of the Chevrolet carryall which President Kraeling brought to Jerusalem last year, the tour was completed without difficulty, and there was general agreement that the journey had been most profitable for our study of archaeology and topography in the Near East.

On the trip to 'Aqabah this month, the group was composed of the same individuals who went to Syria, Turkey and Lebanon, except for Willard Hamrick who was sent to the Augusta Victoria Hospital by his doctor the day before our departure. An infection was soon cured and he has been given a clean bill of health, but as far as the trip was concerned, the damage had been done. Thanks to advance word sent by Mr. G. Lankester Harding, Chief Curator of the Department of Antiquities, we were able to pitch our tent and to cook at the police posts of the Arab Legion. It was raining the day before our departure, and there was rain shortly after our return, but the meteorologist whom I had called at the local airport proved to be accurate; we had no rain during the journey. As those who have travelled through the area will recall, rain is usually welcome in east Jordan except when one is trying to cross the Wadi Mojib or the Wadi Hesa.

Driving through Amman early in the morning the group visited Dhiban where the School excavated last year and then on to Kerak for the night with brief stops along the way to inspect Nabataean sites. The next day we climbed to the top of Jebel Tannur where the temple, altar and room foundations looked very much as I had last seen them in 1937. On the spot one must agree with Dr. Glueck, whose final publication on Khirbet et-Tannur is eagerly awaited, that the Nabataeans chose a prominent location for their temple and displayed great ability and energy in constructing it. Moving on through Tafileh and Shobek we camped at Alji in the police post. Transporting our equipment on three donkeys, we established ourselves in a tomb at el-Habis and spent two days studying and photographing many of the Nabataean tombs, buildings, altars, inscriptions and high places. The varied colors of the sand-stone at Petra make it a paradise for photographers using color film; a quantity of such film was used by members of the party.

Two other high points of the excursion were the trip from Quweira to Ram, and a visit to Tell el-Kheleifeh, King Solomon's port on the Gulf of 'Aqabah. Having read Professor Winnett's account of his visit to Ram last May and having discussed the trip with Père Benoit who recently took a group of twenty students from the Ecole Biblique to the area, I was extremely anxious about our ability to "cut the desert", as Inren, our driver, calls it. But after depositing some of our equipment at the police post in Quweira, and by stopping occasionally to locate the road and to test the sand, we were able to arrive at Ram without difficulty. The officer in charge was hospitality personified and permitted us to put our camp beds in the police post and provided camels for a brief ride in the vicinity. At the spring west of the post part way up Jebel Ram we photographed some of the graffiti and Nabataean inscriptions, and later inspected the remains of the Nabataean temple nearby which was partially excavated in 1934 by the Department of Antiquities and the Dominicans. Walking south through the Wadi Ram we visited the ruins at Ain Hekhalieh and collected a number of flints which are now being classified. On the way back to Quweira we stopped at Bir Ram el-Atiq to see the surface remains of the Nabataean structure there and the so-called Dushara stones, and to photograph the graffiti at Hadhbet el-Hamra located 5 or 6 kilometres east of the 'Aqabah road.

Continuing to 'Aqabah and after a refreshing swim in the Gulf of 'Aqabah, we were able to visit Tell el-Kheleifeh, Ezion-geber of King Solomon's time, which was

excavated by Dr. Nelson Glueck from 1938 to 1940. Because it had been my privilege to have been a student member of the expedition during the first season, I was delighted to see the place again. Now the site is very near the border, in fact, a boundary marker graces the spot in the Wadi el-'Arabah where the tents of the ASOR once stood. Guided by a young British officer who provided jeeps for the ride, we were able to locate the tell which is barely distinguishable from the sand dunes in the vicinity. It is still possible to trace the tops of the walls at the northwest corner of the village where the copper furnaces were once operated, to make out the main features of the main entrance at the southwest corner and to study some of the mud brick walls in the center of the town which still rise in places several feet above the sand. However, in a few more years Solomon's port on the Red Sea will be buried once again in the drifting sands of the Wadi el-Arabah which concealed it from the sight of man for three thousand years.

Back at the School in Jerusalem, the work goes on as usual and the Hostel and the Library continue to serve visiting teachers and students. Guests are not numerous just now, but advance word from people who expect to come next month causes us to expect that the School will be a busy place as visitors arrive for Christmas in Jerusalem and Bethlehém. We send our collective greetings to you in anticipation of the holiday season.

William L. Reed, Director.